

The Old Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Woolley Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Derek Chesterman

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SHM 07/39

July 2007

Summary

Site name: The Old Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Woolley Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8500 8025

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 27th April 2007

Project manager: Joanna Pine

Site supervisor: Joanna Pine

Site code: SHM 07/39

Area of site: c. 0.8 ha

Summary of results: No finds or deposits of archaeological interest were recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 13.07.07
	Steve Preston ✓ 13.07.07

The Old Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Woolley Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Munding

Report 07/39

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Old Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Woolley Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8500 8025) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Colin Dawson of Colin Dawson Associates, Malvern House, Twyford, Reading, Berkshire, RG10 9PY on behalf of Mr Derek Chesterman.

Planning consent (06/00940/FUL) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new bin store, midden and a section of path running from the southern carparks to the toilets and the animal and craft centres on the site. This is subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Royal Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeological Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Joanna Pine on the 27th April 2007. The site code is SHM 07/39.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies within the village of Woolley Green, south of the A4 Bath Road, and less than 1km west of the A404(M) on the west edge of Maidenhead. The site is situated at 44.5m-46m above Ordnance Datum (OD) over a solid geology of Middle Cretaceous Chalk (BGS 1990). The area of the site is currently used as a animal welfare activity centre, with the associated development making improvements to the refuse facilities, access and extension to the Animal Education Centre and Craft Workshops.

Archaeological background

The site lies within a rich area of archaeological activity in the Thames Valley, in particular for the prehistoric and Roman periods (Ford 1987). Locally, an Iron Age enclosure (Robin Hood's Arbour) and linear earthwork at Maidenhead Thicket (Cotton 1961; Bowden *et al.* 1983) present the most visible known archaeology in the vicinity, with in addition, Roman deposits to the west at Littlewick Green.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. This was to involve examination of all areas of ground disturbance, namely excavation for the new buildings, part of a footpath and an area for a midden.

Results

The intrusive works were of modest extent. The foundations for the new structure comprised concrete pads. The trenches for these were dug in two areas: an extension of the Animal Centre (Building A); and the Craft Centre (Building B) (Fig. 3).

Building A had twelve pads excavated, of which the general stratigraphy was uniform. Most were 1.2m square and excavated to c.1m in depth. Most showed little disturbance of the natural strata with 0.3-0.55m of topsoil, overlying 0.35-0.48m of mid orange brown clay silt subsoil. This overlay light orange clay silt with occasional flint natural in the base of all the excavated pits (Fig. 4). No archaeological deposits were revealed and no artefacts recovered.

Building B was positioned in the same location as a recently demolished building. The six pads were excavated to the same dimensions as for Building A. Below the superficial demolition layer and disturbed topsoil, some modern made ground was uncovered in Pit A (Fig. 3) to a depth of 0.4m. Below this was orange clay silt gravelly natural, down to the base of excavation at 1.2m deep. All the remaining pits uncovered remains of subsoil to a depth of 0.4-0.6m, overlying natural geology to the base of excavation. No archaeological deposits were uncovered.

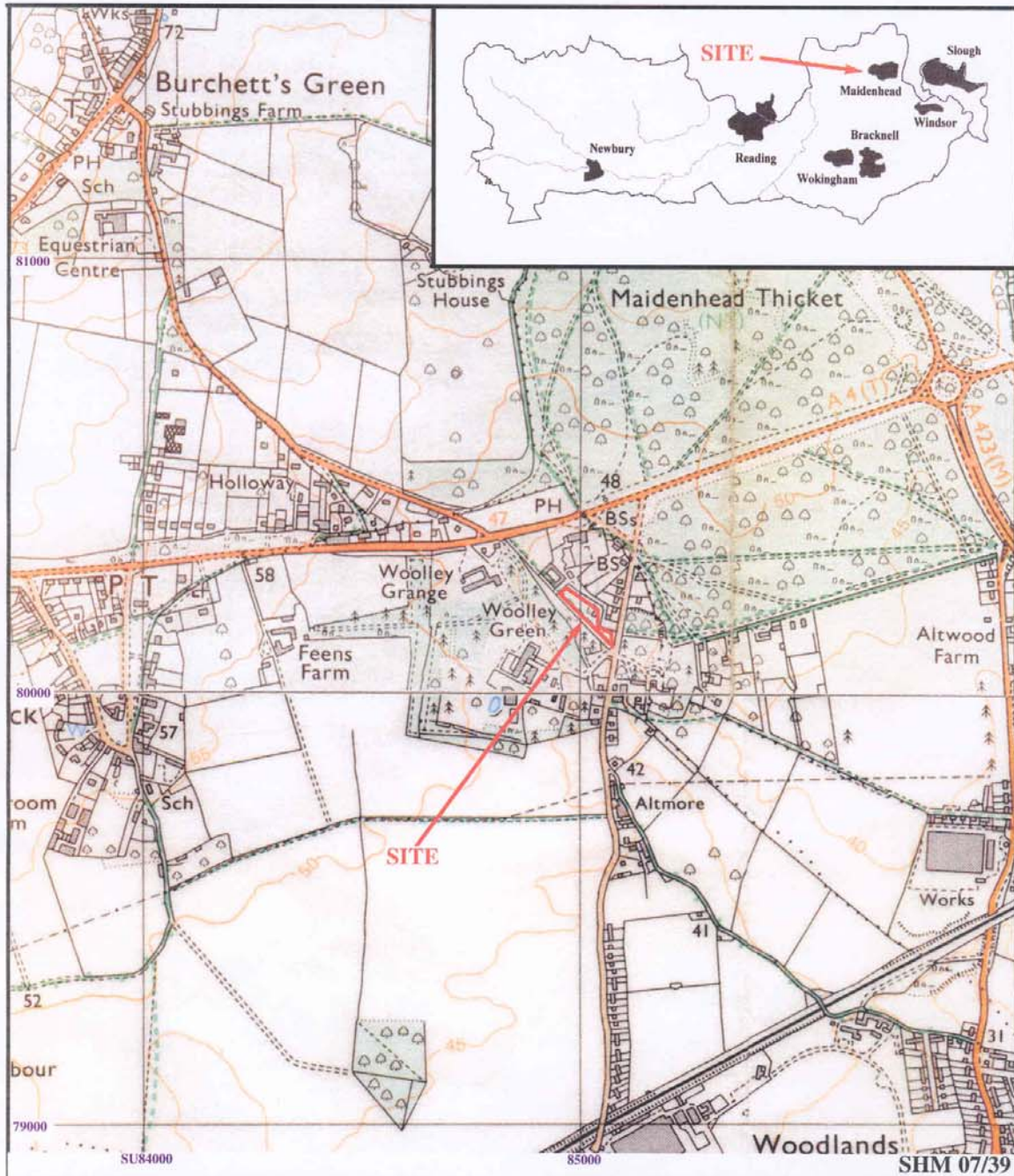
The footpath was excavated to a depth of only 0.2m and was not of sufficient depth to penetrate the subsoil and expose the archaeologically relevant level. Similarly the excavation for the concrete slab for the midden which was c. 10m x 10m was also only stripped of topsoil to a depth of 0.2m to reveal subsoil and no archaeological deposits were uncovered.

Conclusion

The watching brief did not reveal any finds or deposits of archaeological interest. No finds were recovered during this work.

References

- BGS, 1990, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 255, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Bowden, M, Ford, S and Gaffney, V, 1983, 'The excavation of an earthwork on Maidenhead Thicket, 1982', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **71**, (for 1981-2), 21-32
- Cotton, M, 1961, 'Robin Hood's Arbour; and rectilinear enclosures in Berkshire', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **55**, 48-68
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Highways and Planning Occas Pap **1**, Reading
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

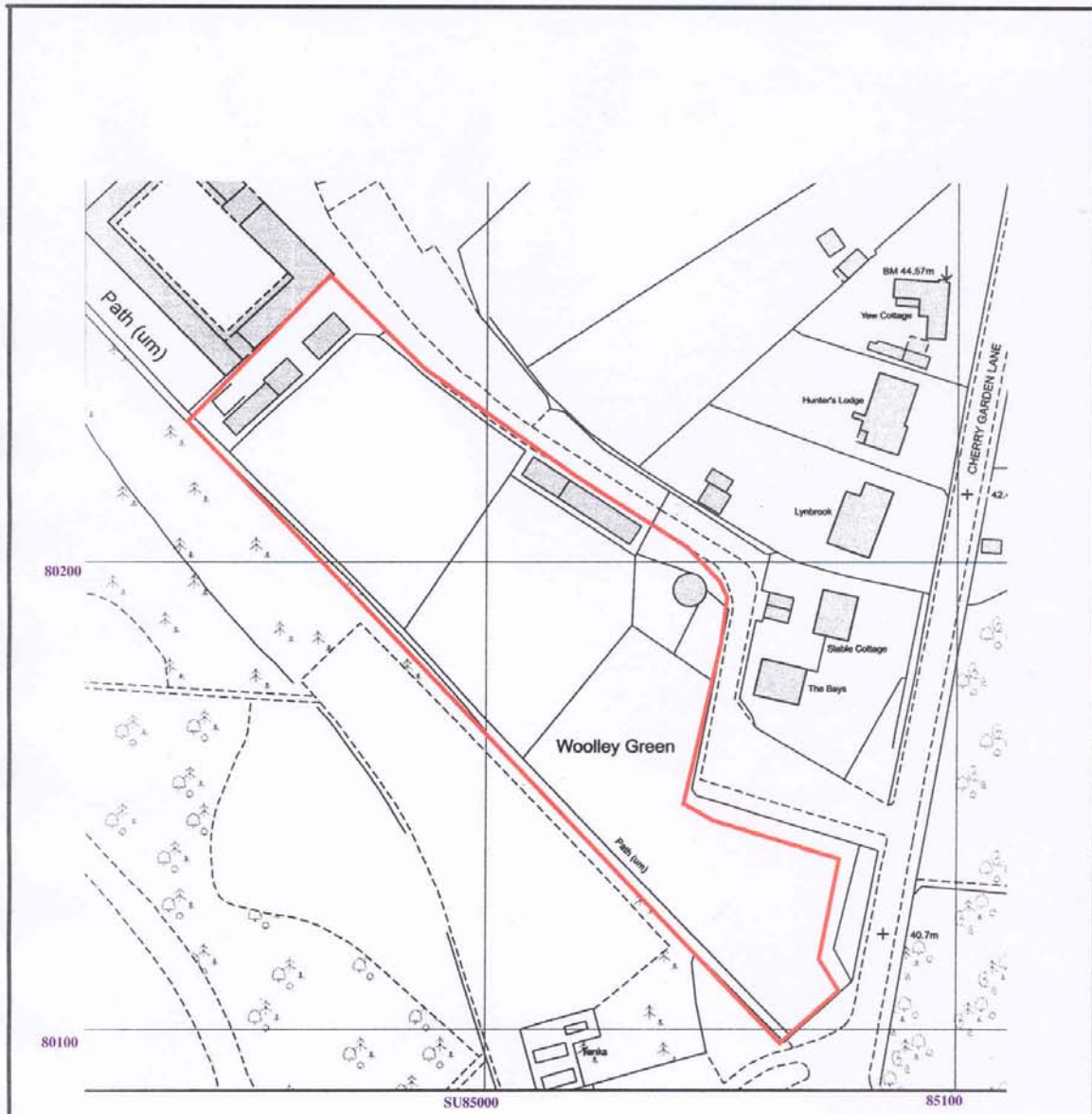


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Figure 1. Location of site within Woolley Green and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site within Woolley Green, off Cherry Garden Lane.

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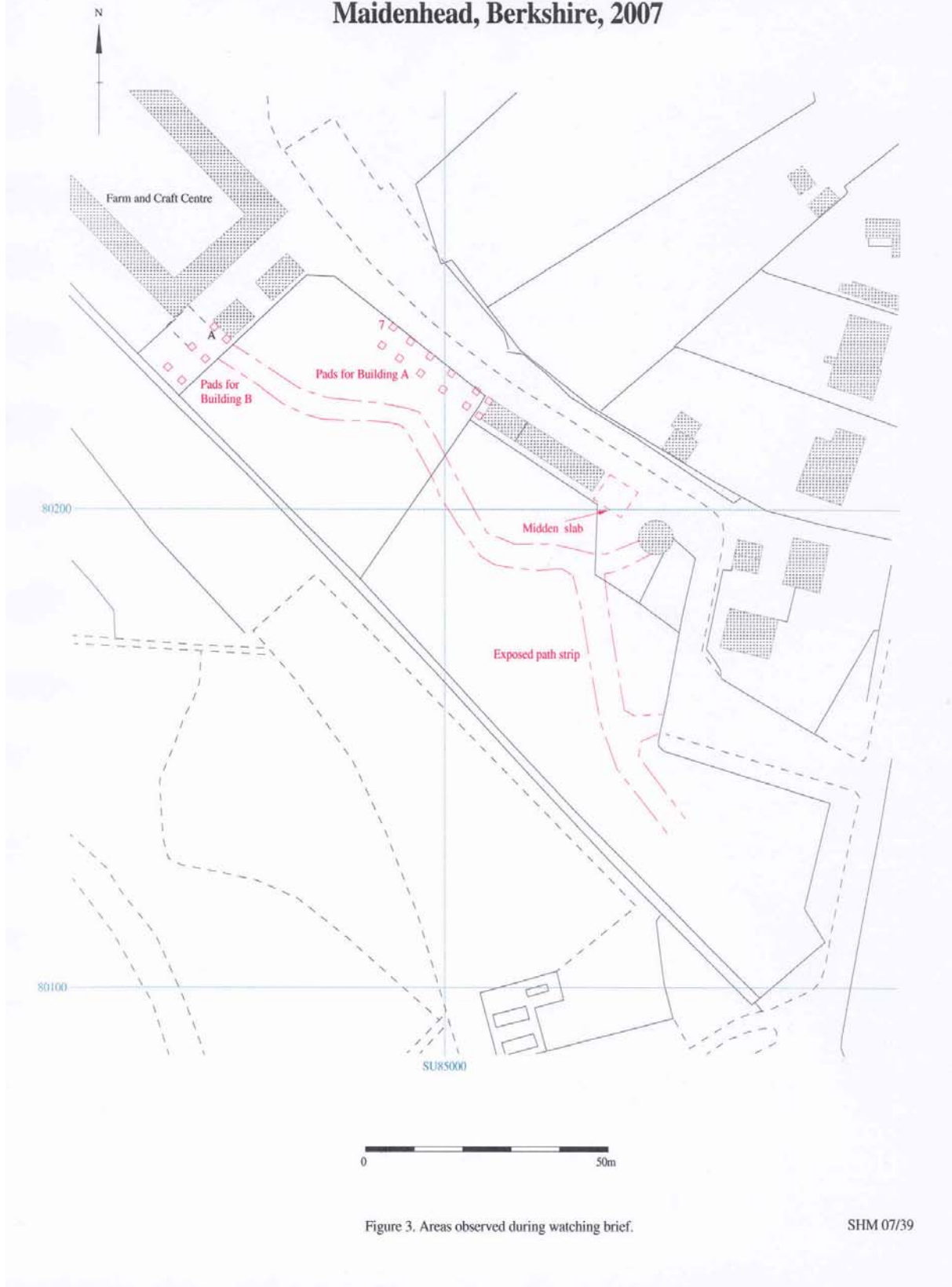


Figure 3. Areas observed during watching brief.

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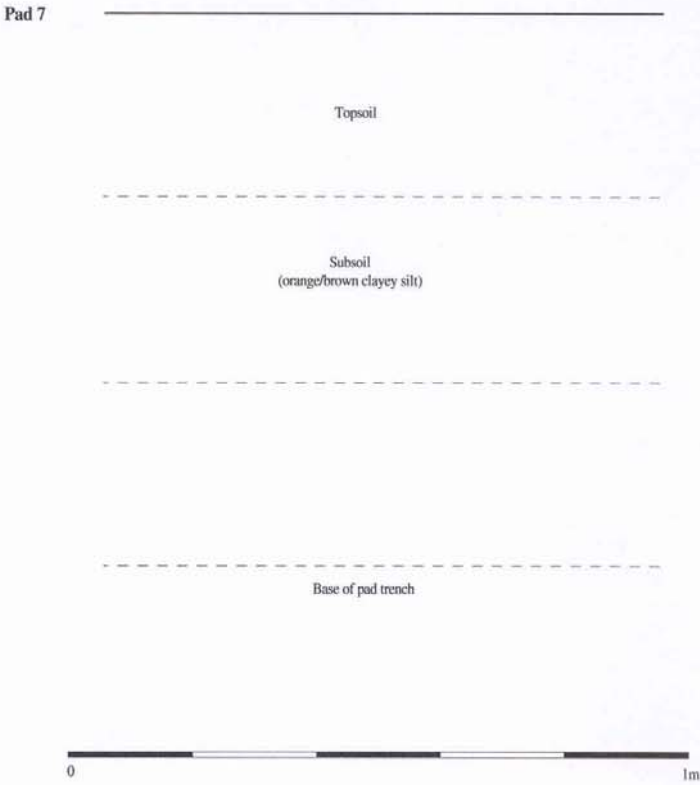


Figure 4. Representative section